

## **COKO BEACH(FR), 9 - tr. Gordon Elliott**

Was given a rating of 162 lb for a win at Navan last autumn, and confirmed it with a second place in the Becher Chase at Aintree. This is the best horse to have come over here, but there is a question mark over how he will deal with the specific features of Pardubice racecourse. However, he has good experience of crosscountry steeplechasing in Ireland. In the winter, he won a crosscountry chase at Punchestown, and in the spring he finished third in the La Touche Cup, a top crosscountry race, in which he gave away a lot of weight all round. He likes soft ground, so the softer the better for him.

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### **Keith Donoghue**

rides for Gordon Elliott, who regularly contends with Willie Mullins for the title of Irish champion trainer over fences. Gordon Elliott has trained over 400 winners, including numerous winners of listed races. For our purposes, it is important to know that he has excellent results in cross country races at Cheltenham. He has won the crosscountry race at the Cheltenham festival four times – three times on Tiger Roll, and last year on Delta Work.

## **JEREMY PASS(IRE), 9 - tr. Joseph Davies**

While he was trained by Paul Nicholls, one of the top trainers in the UK, he had a rating of about 130 lb, which is not bad by our standards. He began to run successfully in point-to-points while with Paul Nicholls, and continued to do so with his new trainer. He won a hunters chase at Listowel at the beginning of June, beating some horses with big names. However, he has no experience with crosscountry racing. In the summer he moved to an American trainer.



## **Teddy Davies**

is a 20-year-old American amateur who has won 17 of his 108 races. Two years ago, he won the Maryland Hunt Cup, emulating two of his relatives. His father, Joseph Davies, won this race over timber fences three times, and his mother, Blythe, won the race once.

## **STREETS OF DOYEN(IRE), 10 - tr. John McConell**

As a novice over hurdles and over fences, he moved in the top category in the UK, and had a rating of 142 lb. After that, his performances dropped off, and even his return to his original trainer has not helped. His current rating is 125 lb. In spring, he tried crosscountry racing at Punchestown, where he made a mistake in mid-race. He at least gained some experience with crosscountry obstacles. However, his current form does not look particularly good.



## **Ben Harvey**

started out in 2018 as a point-to-point rider. He turned professional in 2020, and he has now ridden 70 winners in Ireland. He has experience of riding in crosscountry races at Punchestown. His younger brother, Alex, has ridden Streets Of Doyen.

## **ARGANO, 10 - tr. Martin Liška**

After winning the September Qualification Race last year, he was one of the favourites for the Velka Pardubicka. However, he took off too early at the Taxis and unseated his rider on landing. Finished 5th in the Velka Pardubicka in 2022. This year he did not impress in either of his qualification races, but the extra distance is a plus for him.



## **Martin Liška**

started riding in the mid-1990s, but his best season did not arrive until 2014, when he finished in the top 10 in the jockeys' championship. He has ridden in the Velka Pardubicka 14 times, and his best finishing position was 4th, in 2006. Two years ago, he finished 5th on Argano. He rode his fourth Category I win in his career last year on Argano, when they won one of the qualification races for the Velka Pardubicka.

## ZATARO, 11 - tr. Marián Štangel

Did not appear often at the beginning of his career, but in 2023 he had a full season. He was involved in the mass fall at the Taxis in the Velka Pardubicka, but he ended the season by finishing 2nd in the Velka Slušovicka. This year he is being trained in Slovakia, and he has made only one appearance on the racetrack. He ran in the June Qualification Race with prizemoney of 1 000 000 crowns. He went quite well, but at the end of the race some faster horses came past him.



## James Best

is not one of top riders in the UK, but he has won about 270 races and has made quite a good start to the new season. In the winter, he won a Grade 1 novices chase at Sandown, and he has twice won the Becher Chase over the Grand National course at Aintree. He has ridden in the Velka Pardubicka three times. First time, he finished 6th on Rathlin Rose, and last year he was 4th on Lombardini. He rode at Pardubice earlier this year, finishing 7th on Zataro in the second Qualification Race.

## **SEXY LORD, 8 - tr. Martina Růžičková**

Last year's winner of the Labe Stakes entered the series of Qualification Races for the Velka Pardubicka this year, taking 4th place and 3rd place in races over 5800 metres, which are the best indicators. He is an offensive type of horse, but he has no problem with staying the distance. He has a jockey in the saddle who knows him and can provide the necessary tactical support.



## **Jaroslav Myška**

is one of our most experienced jockeys. He has won the steeplechase jockeys' championship 5 times, and has won 60 Category I races. However, victory in the Velka Pardubicka has so far eluded him. He came closest two years ago, when he finished 2nd on Evžen. He has finished 3rd in the race twice, 4th three times, and 5th four times. He won the Labe Stakes last year on Sexy Lord, and rode him in the first Qualification Race this year.

## **DEL REY(SVK), 9 - tr. Hana Kabelková**

Two years ago, he won the September Qualification Race for the Velka Pardubicka, but after that he was off the track for two years. He returned for this year's August Qualification Race under a new trainer, but he did not finish the race due to a fall. He did better in the September Qualification Race, finishing in 4th place. However, the field was not strong, and he finished 10 lengths behind the winner, Aeneas.



## **Jakub Kocman**

has been riding in races for 17 years, but he has only in recent years started winning major races. He has won 5 Category I races, including a Qualification Race for the Velka Pardubicka on Del Rey in 2022. In the same year, he finished 3rd on Sacamiro in the Velka Pardubicka, his best placing in six rides in the race.

## **GODFREY(FR), 8 - tr. Dalibor Török**

Won the handicap race on Velka Pardubicka day two years ago, and last year he entered the top league when only Chelmsford beat him in the first Qualification Race. Unfortunately, he got involved in the mass fall at the Taxis in the Velka. In the first Qualification Race this year, he took his revenge for his defeat by Chelmsford, and Chelmsford went on to outclass the opposition in the 3rd Qualification Race. All this makes Godfrey one of the main contenders for victory.



## **Jan Faltejsek**

has won the Velka Pardubicka 6 times.- three times on Orphée des Blins, and once each on Charme Look, on Tzigane Du Berlais, and last year on Sacamiro. He has spent a considerable part of his career working abroad. In the UK, he won the Cleeve Hurdle at Cheltenham on Knockara Beau, and in France he worked with champion trainer Guillaume Macaire. He has won many major races in Italy, where he has won the Grande Steeple Chase d'Europa six times. In 2017 he won the Gran Premio di Merano on Al Bustan. In recent years, he has won many races on horses owned by Jiří Charvát.

## **HER HIM(FR), 9 - tr. Ivana Porkátová**

Won the Wielka Wroclawska and the Polish Crystal Cup double last year, and in between these races he took 4th place in the Gran Premio di Merano. This year he has been aimed at crosscountry races at Pardubice. In contrast with previous attempts, he has performed well in crosscountry races, taking 5th place in the first Qualification Race and 4th place in the third Qualification Race. The experience that he has gained could push him further forward.



## **Lenka Neprašová**

is a 20-year-old rider, who started riding in races at the age of 16. She has earned numerous opportunities in the last two seasons. She has experience of riding abroad, mainly in Italy. Two weeks ago, she finished in 8th place in the Gran Premio di Merano. She has also ridden a winner in France. She has ridden Her Him in each of his three races this year at Pardubice.

## **TALENT, 13 - tr. Hana Kabelková**

Won the Velka Pardubicka in 2021, and took 2nd place in each of the last two years. However, he has only appeared once this year, when he was disappointing in the first Qualification Race. Due to health problems, it has not been easy to prepare him, and a lack of further races may be a problem. In addition, he is at an age when the performances of horses often drop off.



## **Jan Kratochvíl**

has twice won the steeplechase jockeys championship. He won the Velka Pardubicka in 2017 on No Time to Lose, and the Gran Premio di Merano on Mazhilis. He has enjoyed particular success at Lysá nad Labem racecourse, where he has won the First of May Steeplechase 8 times and the Eva Palyzová Memorial 3 times. He would have been on Chelmsford, on which he won the 3rd Qualification Race, but the horse suffered an injury.

## **STAR(GER), 13 - tr. Hana Kabelková**

Although he finished 6th in the Velka Pardubicka in 2021, in spite of faulty equipment, it was not until last year, after changing trainers, that he became one of our recognised leading crosscountry chasers, when he was placed in two Qualification Races and finished 3rd in the Velka Pardubicka. In the first Qualification Race this year, he contended for victory and was beaten only by Godfrey and Chelmsford. The million-crown June Qualification Race did not work out for him, as he had to come from too far behind in a slowly-run race. He was scratched from the final Qualification Race, after the date had to be put back due to the flooding emergency.



## **Ondřej Velek**

started out as a flat rider, but as time passed he gradually moved over mainly to steeplechasing. In the past, he worked in Switzerland, but more recently he has often been engaged by the Váňa family training centre, for which he has ridden several big race winners in the Czech Republic and in Italy. He has ridden 9 times in the Velka Pardubicka, twice partnering No Time to Lose, on which he finished 4th in 2021. He rode Star in the first Qualification Race this year, in which they finished in 3rd place.

## **HIGH IN THE SKY(FR), 7 - tr. Dalibor Török**

Has followed a similar preparation to his half-brother and stablemate Godfrey. He followed Godfrey to win the handicap race on Velka Pardubicka day last year, and moved on to Qualification Races this year. He finished 4th in the shorter June million-crown Qualification Race, and then he finished 2nd behind Aeneasin the last Qualification Race. The extra distance should suit him, but he is not yet as good as his stable companion.



## **Daniel Vyhnálek**

started out on the flat, where he won the June Grand Prix and the Winter Queen Stakes, but in recent years he has ridden increasingly over fences. He finished 8th in the Velka Pardubicka in 2021. Last year, he fell at the Taxis from Godfrey, a horse that he had ridden as a 4-year -old.

## **DULCAR DE SIVOLA(FR), 11 - tr. Luboš Urbánek**

Has been one of the hopefuls for the last 5 years, but his performances have been disappointing. He has completed the Velkau Pardubicka 5 times, but always among the back markers. This summer, however, he and other horses in the same ownership moved to a well-known training centre, where he and the other horses have shown much improved form. He recently won the trial race for the Labe Stakes by a wide margin. This gives him prospects for the Velka that he had never seemed to have before.



## **Thomas Beaurain**

was one of the top 5 in the French steeplechase jockeys' championship between 2015 and 2018. This 36-year-old French jockey has ridden over 500 winners, including 5 in Grade 3 races. He has also been successful in cross country races, winning the Grand Cross de Craon and also the Grand Steeple-Chase de Flandres in Waregem in 2017. This year he has ridden at two meetings at Pardubice, on Mr Spex.

## **SANTA KLARA(IRE), 9 - tr. Josef Váňa ml.**

First ran at Pardubice last year, after winning crosscountry races in Italy. She finished in a close third place in the million-crown June Qualification Race, but she made a mistake in the Velka Pardubicka at the Big English Fence, and another mistake at Havel's Fence took her out of the race. This year she was again in contention in the million-crown June Qualification Race, in which the slow pace may not have suited her. She recently won the Wielka Wroclawska convincingly, finishing ahead of Pretty King, and Pretty King went on to finish 3rd in the Gran Premio di Merano.



**Josef Bartoš** is our most successful steeplechase jockey of all time, and has won almost 900 races over fences. He has won the Czech championship and the Italian championship several times, and has won the Velka Pardubicka three times – on Decent Fellow in 2006, on Sixteen in 2008, and on Theophilos in 2019. He has won the Gran Premio di Merano four times on L'Estran, and they also finished 2nd this year. Last year he finished 5th in the Grand Steeple-Chase de Paris on Suroit. He has ridden Santa Klara not only in Italy, but also in last year and this year's June Velka Pardubicka Qualification Races, which had prize money of 1 000 000 crowns .

## **PLAYER, 12 - tr. Lenka Kvapilová**

A long-term member of our circle of top crosscountry chasers. He came closest to winning the race 4 years ago, when he finished 2nd behind Hegnus. Last year he was pulled up after the Irish Bank due to an equipment failure. However, his form has dipped this year, and he has finished at the back of the field in each of three Qualification Races. It seems that his age may have caught up with him.



## **Marcel Novák**

began riding in races in 1994, but he did not win the first of his two Czech steeplechase jockeys' championships until 2017. He has ridden in the Velka Pardubicka 13 times. He has ridden a total of 16 Category I winners, including four Qualification Races for the Velka Pardubicka. In the past, he was 3 times placed in the Velka Pardubicka on Kasim, and in recent years he has partnered Player several times, their best result being 2nd place in 2020.

## **LOMBARGINI(GER)\*, 13 - tr. Stanislav Popelka**

Was in his best form two years ago, but he did not get round in the Velka Pardubicka. Last year he took 4th place, but some way behind the first three. He has not shown much this year in the Qualification Races, but in the first of these races he seemed to go to the front very early and he had nothing left for the finish. Then he made a mistake at the Big English Fence, which had never caused him a problem in the past.



## **Jan Odložil**

started riding in races in 2008, but it was a number of years before he became one of our leading steeplechase jockeys. His first Category I winner was when he won a Qualification Race on Sottovento 4 years ago. His best season was two years ago, when he won the steeplechase jockeys' championship, taking advantage of the opportunity to replace the injured Jan Faltejsek on horses owned by Jiří Charvát, and excelling on them at the Velka Pardubicka meeting. His best position so far in the Velka Pardubicka has been 6th, which he has achieved twice.